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C o m m e n t a t o r**

Commentary, analysis and investigations  
on issues affecting African Americans  
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**Superintendent David Brewer's Report Card:  
It's the L.A. Times that Fails to Make the Grade  
By Dr. Anthony Asadullah Samad, PhD  
BlackCommentator.com Columnist**

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The *Los Angeles Times* newspaper has rarely offered a fair and balanced portrayal of the black community. It usually was (is) a strategic player in the witch hunt to depose black leaders, no matter who they were (are). Whether it was former Lt Governor Mervyn Dymally, the late Mayor Tom Bradley, former Police Chief, Willie Williams or now their latest target, Los Angeles Unified School District, David Brewer, you could rarely ever expect to read anything positive about local black leadership in the *L.A. Times*.

Now being run from Chicago, the *L.A. Times* has no clue on what is going on in the black community. Truth be told, they never really did - save for a few well respected journalists they had that actually lived in the community and had to jump up and down on their editors' desks to get anything newsworthy (and positive) in the paper.

Okay, so we understand what the *L.A. Times* is and what it represents. However, the *Times* rabid attacks on Superintendent Brewer took an unjustified turn when, last week, the paper called for his resignation (in a November 13th editorial). Now, I've called the *Times* "propaganda press" in the past, but this latest dig against Brewer is over the top.

First and foremost, you have to ask, who's tugging the *Times* chain on this? Villaraigosa (he better not be - he's running for re-election in 2009 and wouldn't want Brewer, who's only halfway through his contract, to represent to him what Bernie Parks' contract non-renewal represented to Jim Hahn's re-election prospects)? UTLA? The LAUSD Board? None of whom have brought the kind of change to the district in the last two years that Brewer has. All of the above have continued to either point out

problems or be part of the problem. Their solutions have been part and parcel conjecture at Brewer expense.

The *Times* editorial has to be more about politics than it is about Brewer's performance, which has been commendable, considering the array of problems he walked into. On its face, the timing of the *Times* editorial doesn't pass the smell test. In fact, it down right stinks when you lift it up to try to find out what's beneath it.

Meanwhile, Brewer, has deflected the complaints of his detractors - some of whom didn't want him there in the first place - like water down a duck's back, while working the air, the ground and the sea to remedy the district's problems. And he's making progress. What more can he be asked to do, that he hasn't already done, with a district as large, cumbersome and dysfunctional as LAUSD? Did I say *dysfunctional*??? I mean to say, deca-dysfunctional. Ten times as dysfunctional as any school district in the nation you can point to.

He spent most of his first year cleaning up the doo-doo of his predecessor while he was handcuffed to what most consider a co-superintendent. And he has still advanced the district.

Brewer's accomplishments are no small feats. He landed in the midst of a political school board take-over and survived. He was forced to manage two crises, neither of his own making - the payroll system and the lead in the water. That was the reason for his "slow start". If Barack Obama wants to know what its like to fight multiple wars on multiple fronts, have him call Dave.

He gave the lowest performing schools the highest priority, netting the highest academic gains in recent years (higher than the schools the Mayor oversees), created a statewide coalition of superintendents to restore much needed programs in the poorest schools, and got a critical school bond passed - the only bond in U.S. history with 69% of the vote, despite two major newspapers endorsing against it and a bad economy. The *Times* endorsed against and did everything in its power, editorially, to defeat the bond. The voters rejected the *Times* and sided with Brewer to create 50,000-80,000 jobs over 10 years. Brewer beat the *Times* so now they want to orchestrate his ouster by blaming him when there is plenty of blame to go around.

A projected financial shortfall for the district, the core of the *Times* apprehension, is tied to the state's budget shortfall and has nothing to do with Brewer. When the state bleeds, local government bleeds and the district has been bleeding for awhile. The test to fiscally turn around the district will take more than the length of Brewer's contract, but the *Times* is trying to fail Brewer before he can finish the test. To date he's passed every other test in district. The test scores are up. The bond was passed. The schools are being built. Bad teachers are being replaced. Violence in the schools is down. In the black community, Brewer is passing the test with flying colors and everybody I talk to is willing to let him finish taking the test. Any anybody who has half a brain knows that nobody can fix this level of dysfunction, one that was 30 years in the making, in four years - much less two. The *Times* need to stop their biased foolishness.

Obviously, Brewer has done a better job at adjusting to the L.A. landscape than the *Los Angeles Times*' new owners have. The *Times* editorial was wrongheaded and

misguided. With the way they continue to endorse the wrong choices in the black community (No on Measure Q, Bernard Parks for Supervisor), whatever the *Times* likes, we don't (except Obama), and whatever the *Times* dislikes, we definitely need to take a longer look at. David Brewer included.

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